

resistance, which could make common procedures more dangerous by making current infection treatments ineffective; challenges like skyrocketing drug costs and pharmaceutical companies who game the FDA approval system to keep more affordable drugs off the market; and challenges like improving health equity.

I have repeatedly raised the need for the FDA to improve diversity in clinical trials because, when women or people of color or others are left out of the clinical trials, this undermines people's health by delaying information they and their healthcare providers need to understand how a treatment will affect them specifically—for example, whether it is safe during pregnancy—and by making it hard to identify differences in the safety and effectiveness of treatments for those populations.

As the hard-working staff at the FDA continues to tackle these challenges, they deserve a Senate-confirmed leader with experience on these issues to lead those efforts. Dr. Califf worked on these challenges before, when he was previously confirmed to lead FDA in an overwhelming bipartisan vote, and he demonstrated in his hearing with the HELP Committee that he is ready to take them on again and return as Commissioner.

So I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm Dr. Califf and working with him to ensure that the FDA continues to protect our families, uphold the gold standard of safety and effectiveness, and put science and data first.

I yield the floor.

### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 668, Robert McKinnon Califf, of North Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Gary C. Peters, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Mazie Hirono, Alex Padilla, Tina Smith, Christopher A. Coons, Amy Klobuchar, Jon Tester.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Robert McKinnon Califf, of North Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 45, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 54 Ex.]

##### YEAS—49

Baldwin	Heinrich	Romney
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blunt	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Burr	King	Sinema
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Menendez	Tester
Casey	Merkley	Van Hollen
Collins	Murkowski	Warner
Coons	Murphy	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warren
Duckworth	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Durbin	Padilla	Wyden
Feinstein	Peters	
Gillibrand	Reed	

##### NAYS—45

Barrasso	Hagerty	Portman
Blackburn	Hassan	Risch
Blumenthal	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sanders
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lummis	Shelby
Crapo	Manchin	Sullivan
Cruz	Markey	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Tillis
Ernst	McConnell	Tuberville
Fischer	Moran	Wicker
Grassley	Paul	Young

##### NOT VOTING—6

Capito	Hoeven	Luján
Graham	Kennedy	Toomey

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the Senate will now proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Robert McKinnon Califf, of North Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. I would ask consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this evening to talk about Black History Month and, in particular, to talk about a program that my office has been presenting every February for many years now.

Each February, it has been my privilege to honor several Pennsylvanians as part of the celebration of Black History Month. This year, we pay tribute to four esteemed Pennsylvanians who have helped their community and the Commonwealth build resilience.

And I will list them first, and then I will be talking about each of them in greater detail: First, Tyrone Holmes, from my hometown of Scranton, PA; Della Clark of Philadelphia, PA; Julius Boatwright of Pittsburgh; and Theo Braddy of Harrisburg—all Pennsylvanians. And their work is demonstrative of this year's theme for our program: "Resilience in the Face of Adversity."

As their persistence and strength has helped their communities surmount significant difficulties this year, their enduring leadership is an encouragement to me after a year where, sadly, resilience has been sorely needed throughout our Commonwealth and throughout our country.

Now, in some ways, we have made some progress in the last year. Just consider this: The national economy created 6.7 million jobs, the most ever in the first year of a Presidency. Pennsylvania's unemployment rate went way down from 7.1 to 5.4. Tens of thousands of jobs have been added just in Pennsylvania. Wages are up, and child poverty is down. The number of fully vaccinated Americans has increased from 2 million to 213 million in just the last year. And we have more tools to manage COVID-19 and keep us safe.

And, finally, the number of schools open for in-person learning has skyrocketed from just 46 percent a year ago to now 95 percent of schools. Some believe it is as high as 98 percent.

However, despite those measures of progress, we are still grappling with so much—grappling with a virus that is adaptable and still deadly, especially for people with preexisting health conditions, and even more so for those who are unvaccinated.

And as COVID-19 has lingered, so, too, have the attendant direct effects. Our schools still struggle to teach our kids and to maintain the regularity that is critical to learning.

Our businesses must contend with fluctuating demand and a fragile supply chain. Many of our children have fallen behind on their other critical vaccinations and routine doctor visits. Many children and adults struggle with isolation and pandemic-related mental health challenges.

We know that much of the adverse impact of COVID-19 has been particularly acute for communities of color. In the United States, Black Americans have experienced higher rates of COVID-19 hospitalization and death compared to White Americans. And